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containing a population of 50,000 inhabitants or more, to assess, levy and collect in the usual manner a special tax not to exceed $1\frac{1}{2}$ mills on a dollar for the purpose of erecting a public library building. The Library Association of Portland is immediately taking advantage of this new law, and has plans under consideration for the much needed new building. The second section provides that this tax may be divided and may be assessed, levied and collected in not more than two successive years, but it shall never aggregate more than the $1\frac{1}{2}$ mills. The third section provides that this tax shall be used solely for the erection of a public library building at the county seat upon a site approved by the county and conveyed to the county by any person, firm or corporation. The county court is also authorized to contract for the use and occupation of this building with any corporation maintaining and operating a public library at the county seat. This contract may be upon such terms and conditions and extend for such a period as may seem advisable to the county court, but in the contract it is provided that the plans for the county library building are to be in accordance with the plans prepared by architects to be selected and under the control of the management of the library, subject to the approval of the county court. A fourth section reiterates the command that the library shall be free to all the inhabitants of the county.

In addition to the amended county library law and the new law relating to county library buildings, the Oregon legislature also passed a bill concerning farm libraries. This bill was introduced by a legislator who quoted J. J. Hill that "every farmer should have a library of agricultural books." This law provides that the county commissioners may appropriate \$200 of the general fund of the county for the purpose of establishing farm libraries. The value of the Oregon law, it seems to me, is its extreme simplicity. No new elements are introduced; no new boards are established. The contracts are made with the county court which consists of the county judge and two commissioners. This is the

governing body of the county with whom all contracts are made. The power, the responsibility, are left where they should be, with the librarian and directors of each county library.

The CHAIRMAN: We will have a very brief presentation of an older library system, by Miss CORINNE A. METZ, of the Brumback library, Van Wert County, Ohio.

AN OHIO COUNTY LIBRARY

The Brumback library of Van Wert County, Ohio, is the result of the liberality of a former citizen of Van Wert, John Sanford Brumback, who in his will directed that a sufficient sum from his estate be expended in the erection of a library building, on condition that the county equip and maintain it. The conditions of the will were accepted by the County Commissioners, who entered into a contract with the heirs of Mr. Brumback to name the library in his honor and forever maintain it by levying a tax on all taxable property of the county for its support.

In 1899 there was no county library to accept as a model, no county librarians with whom to compare notes, so the library of Van Wert County has gradually worked out its own county library system.

The library is situated in the county seat, Van Wert, a city of 8,000 inhabitants and the center of a prosperous agricultural district, the only town of considerable size in the county, with the exception of Delphos, a city of 5,000 situated partly in Van Wert County and partly in an adjoining county. There are, in addition to Delphos, five towns with a population of 500 or over and each of these we have utilized as a distributing center. In addition we have selected other points of vantage, often the village post-office or the cross-roads store, from which the surrounding country can be served. Fixed collections of books are sent from the central library, according to a regular schedule, so that the stations receive four times a year new collections of 125 books. Extra collections varying from 50 to 100 volumes are sent

to the stations requesting these and we urge the caretakers of the stations to send us titles of all books requested by their patrons. The branch librarians, as we call them, in most cases the postmaster, clerk or owner of the store, receive \$50 a year for their services, in return for which we require of them monthly reports of circulation, careful attention to the packing and return of the boxes, and as much interest in the work as we are able to get, sometimes not a very large amount.

Our school collection, though a separate department, continues the work of rural extension, since we loan to any teacher of the country schools, collections of books for school room use, to be changed as often or as seldom as the individual teacher wishes to make the exchange. Our greatest development during the past year has been in this department, due partly, I think, to the fact that there are in several townships of the county school supervisors, whose co-operation we have been able to secure, and partly because we have this year placed a trained assistant in charge of the work, her duty being to aid the teachers in their selection of books, make up collections when these are called for, and compile lists of books for given grades. I have also attended a number of teachers' meetings and township institutes, sometimes merely calling attention to the school collection, but more often talking about books themselves. We find that the teachers need not so much to have their interest awakened as to have their knowledge of children's books increased. We have no settled plan of distribution, but consider each case an individual one, even though extra time is consumed in doing so. In one town of 800, the superintendent of the town schools is also superintendent of the township schools and we have sent to him a collection sufficiently large to supply each of the seven teachers under his direction. The teachers go to him to make their selection and when one collection is used up, he is promptly supplied with another. In another township the school supervisor in his visits of inspection, changes from one school to another the seventeen fixed

collections sent out from the library. Both plans work admirably and the rivalry resulting further stimulates the work.

We keep no separate record of town and country borrowers, since the library exists impartially for all, and we have placed the emphasis on the personal side of the work rather than on the compilation of statistics. During the past year, I have visited each of the fifteen branch stations at least once and many of them several times, but in the future I hope to make a round of the stations at least three times a year. Last year we held a meeting of the branch librarians at the central library and although the attendance was small, we considered it worth while. We shall make it an annual event and shall also have, this year, a teachers' day, when the county teachers will be made welcome and an unobtrusive effort made to interest them in the school collection.

With the impetus recently given in Ohio to the teaching of agriculture in the country schools, we shall be enabled to reach many teachers and individuals who have thus far been skeptical of the practical help to be gained from the library. We are also gradually accumulating a comprehensive agricultural reference collection which we hope in time to make effective. With a state institute speaker on our library board we are able to keep in close touch with the granges and farmers' institutes and have secured from him invaluable aid in the selection of agricultural books. County fair is in Van Wert County an event looked forward to from one year to the next and we have utilized this opportunity to exploit the library. We have had, at various times, exhibits of bulletins and lists, model children's collections, recent books on agriculture, etc. The direct results are not always easy to see but our endeavor is to relate the library to every activity of the county.

In a sense I believe that the rural problem is bigger than the city problem. As Liberty Hyde Bailey puts it: "We must do constructive work. We must inspire the reading habit, direct it and then satisfy it." Because of this we must, I think, devote

much of our time and energy to activities which have always seemed to me to lie rather outside of library work, the formation of clubs and debating societies, lectures and institute work, and story telling in the country schools. The average man or woman dwelling in an agricultural community is both busy and independent and unless we can persuade him that what we have to offer is what he needs or wants we can accomplish little. Nor can we approach the problem with any feeling of condescension or patronage. The idea that I occasionally find existing in the minds of librarians and trustees, that the people of rural communities will hasten to take advantage of an opportunity they have so long been deprived of, seems to me to be wholly without foundation. As a matter of fact, they are slow to seek of their own accord what they have for so long been able to do without. Tact and a knowledge of local conditions are necessary tools, together with a rigorous application of the golden rule.

The advantages of the county as the unit have been too well brought out in the earlier discussions of the subject to require repetition,—the disadvantages, as I know conditions in my own county, I have been unable to find.

The CHAIRMAN: The next paper is by Mr. FRANKLIN F. HOPPER, librarian of the Tacoma public library on

THE BASIS OF SUPPORT OF ORGANIZATIONS FOR PUBLIC LIBRARY WORK

Taxation, a fundamental necessity for the maintenance of civilization, must in some form provide the chief means of support of public libraries. In spite of the universal aversion to paying taxes, there is no one act which can be performed by a community, which brings in so large return to the credit of general happiness, as the judicious expenditure, for public purposes, of a fair percentage of general wealth raised by an equitable system of taxation. At the same time, consider the multitude of services and the tremendous demands

for expenditure which are being forced upon local government by modern urban life. In a paper in the *Atlantic Monthly* for April, Ex-mayor McClellan stated that the gross municipal expenditure is increasing at the rate of 8.08 per cent per annum, which if continued will double in eleven years, and that the per capita cost is increasing at the rate of three per cent per annum, which, if maintained, will double in 33 years. He says that:

"Even under normal conditions, if the present rate of increase in the cost of municipal government continues, the tax on city real estate must ultimately equal its rental value. Of course, the moment that this occurs taxation has become confiscation, and the dearest wish of the pure socialist has been realized. The only alternative is retrenchment; retrenchment so merciless as to be beyond practical consideration until the pendulum of public opinion, having reached its collectivist limit, begins to swing in the opposite direction. Time alone can show whether we are on the eve of an individualistic reaction or whether the present collectivist tendency is destined to grow stronger and more widespread until it commits us to a policy of governmental activity hitherto undreamed of, and only possible of realization through repudiation of public debt and the confiscation of private property."

We must be awake to the tendency of the times, watchful that in the rapid social and economic changes the library is strengthened in its position in our civic life. There is nothing to fear for the library in a possibly ultimate socialistic society or in a city supported by single tax, but we must be on our guard. It is time we studied more carefully taxation in relation to libraries, the principles which underlie their support, discover their present status in municipal activities, and be prepared for the future.

Four chief considerations are naturally suggested by the topic, "The basis of library support," first, the reasons for asking for support by taxation; second, methods of effectively presenting budgets to appropriating bodies; third, principles which